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# Center News/Faculty and Staff Updates

Human Rights Brief

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## CENTER NEWS/FACULTY AND STAFF UPDATES

### CENTER NEWS

#### Center Co-Sponsors Conference on International Perspective on the Prevention of Torture

On February 23, the Center, the Office of the Dean, and the Association for the Prevention of Torture co-sponsored a day-long conference entitled, "International Conference on the Prevention of Torture and Other Ill-Treatment." A renowned group of international experts, including policy-makers, lawyers, civil servants, and scholars, analyzed and proposed key measures to prevent torture and other ill-treatment including: laws that criminalize torture; judicial procedures to thwart impunity; interrogation practices; and the opening of places of detention to external monitors. The three panels' themes were: "Are Adequate Legal Frameworks in Place at the Domestic Level?," "How are Laws Applied and Detention Practices Reformed?," and "Transparency and Access of Independent Experts to All Places of Detention." Speakers included: **Dean Claudio Grossman** (Dean, WCL), **Mark Thomson** (Association for the Prevention of Torture), **Manfred Nowak** (UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment), **Diane Orentlicher** (WCL), **Ambassador Luis Gallegos** (UN Committee Against Torture), **Matt Pollard** (Amnesty International), **Rick Wilson** (WCL), **Steven Watt** (ACLU Human Rights Program), **James Ross** (Human Rights Watch), **Eugene Fidell** (National Institute of Military Justice), **David Danzig** (Human Rights First), **Joao Nataf** (UN Committee Against Torture), **Judge H. Ted Rubin** (Juvenile Courts and Justice Systems), **Santiago Canton** (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights), **Dean Malcolm Evans** (Dean, Bristol University), **Nora Sveaass** (UN Committee Against Torture), **Felice Gaer** (UN Committee Against Torture), **Viviana Krsticevic** (Center for Justice and International Law). *This conference as well as all other Center events are available as on demand webcasts at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/humright/center/webcast.cfm>. A transcript of the conference is forthcoming and will also be available on the Center's website.*

#### Day-Long Conference Highlights Acute Problems in Iraqi Refugee Policy

On March 17, the Center and the WCL International Human Rights Law Clinic co-hosted a conference "Iraqi Refugee Crisis: Present-Day Challenges and Opportunities for Lasting Solutions." Those in the audience—which included representatives from various U.S. government agencies and offices, embassies, NGOs, and think tanks—heard from a very distinguished group of speakers. These included: **Bill Frelick** (Human Rights Watch), **Michel Gabaudan** (UNHCR), **Kirk Johnson** (The List Project), **Adberrahim Sabir** (UNAMI), **Barbara Stack** (Dept. of Homeland Security), **Meetali Jain** (WCL), **Dean Claudio Grossman** (WCL), **Michele Pistone** (WCL), **Elizabeth Campbell** (Refugee Council USA), **Sarnata Reynolds** (Amnesty International), **Adam Shapiro** (filmmaker/activist), **Chris Nugent** (Holland & Knight LLP), **Emily Brooks** (WCL Int'l Human Rights Law Clinic), **Ellen Erichsen** (WCL Int'l Human Rights Clinic), **Hussam Harb Hamid AlMukhtar** (Canisius College), **Ed Murray** (Iraqi Student Project), **Jayesh Rathod** (WCL), and **Dr. Thomas Barnett** (author). A special panel featured **H.E. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein**, **H.E. Imad Moustapha**, and **H.E. Samir Sumaida'ie**, ambassadors to the United States from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Syria, and Iraq, respectively. This special panel was moderated by **Deborah Amos** of National Public Radio. **U.S. Representative Alcee L. Hastings** gave a stirring lunchtime keynote address about the need for a "humanitarian surge" to support the refugees. **Ahlam Mahmood**, an Iraqi human rights activist who was recently resettled in Chicago, provided first-hand testimony of her experience and stressed the need to provide more resources and support for those who have left Iraq because of the ongoing conflict there.

#### The Center Co-Hosts Ground-breaking International Conference on Human Trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and the Sex Sector

On March 18, the Center co-hosted a highly successful conference with the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) to address the issues of human trafficking, the sex sector, and the impact of HIV/AIDS. The conference, organized by **Ann Jordan**, director of the Center's Human Trafficking and Forced Labor Project, brought together almost 150 attendees from the government, the military, NGOs, and the academic community. Speakers included: **Serra Sippel** (CHANGE), **Zoe Hudson** (Open Society Institute), **Martina Vandenberg** (Jenner and Block), **Ann Jordan** (WCL), **Sara Bradford** (Asia Pacific Network of Sex Work Projects), **Christina Arnold** (Prevent Human Trafficking), **Dr. Shilpa Merchant** (Population Services International), **Sneha Barot** (Guttmacher Institute), **Sylvia Mollet** (DANAYASO), **Pauline Muchina** (UNAIDS), and **Gabriela Leite** (Davida). The conference was unique in that it created space not just for advocates to speak, but also provided a forum for sex workers themselves to share their stories and ideas with the audience. The conference was part of a week that also included meetings with officials on Capitol Hill and at the State Department, as well as sessions with the National Organization for Women and Feminist Majority, to discuss the difficulties presented by the previous Administration's policies on these issues, particularly the impact of the Anti-Prostitution Pledge.

#### THE HON. MICHAEL D. KIRBY DISCUSSES CAMBODIAN HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES

On April 17, the **Hon. Michael D. Kirby AC CMG**, recently retired Justice of the High Court of Australia, delivered a lunchtime lecture at the law school. Speaking to an audience which included WCL students, staff, and faculty, as well as representatives from the U.S. State and Justice Departments, the Brookings Institution, and the Embassies of East Timor and Algeria, Kirby described the human rights chal-

lenges facing the country of Cambodia and the region as a whole. He answered questions about his role as the former Special Representative of the Secretary General for Human Rights in Cambodia in addition to fielding some queries about human rights issues pertaining to his native Australia.

### **The State Secrets Privilege and Extraordinary Rendition Discussed at Center Event**

The Center hosted a highly engaging lunchtime event, “The Obama Administration and the State Secrets Privilege” on March 4. The students in attendance heard WCL professors **Amanda Frost**, **Daniel Metcalfe**, and **Stephen Vladeck** discuss the implications of the Obama Administration’s February 9 announcement that it would maintain the same position as the Bush Administration with respect to the state secrets privilege.

### **Lunchtime Discussion on the Impact of the Bashir Arrest Warrant**

Two weeks after the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, the Center’s new Student Advisory Board hosted the first event of its term in a very successful lunchtime talk on March 19 called, “A Step Forward or a Roadblock to Peace and Justice in Darfur?” WCL Professors **Diane Orentlicher** and **Susana SáCouto**, **Niemat Ahmadi** of the Save Darfur Coalition, and **Abderrahim Sabir** of Human Rights Watch analyzed the March 4 arrest warrant issued for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

### **Persecution of Iranian Baha’ is Discussed at Emotional Lunchtime Event**

On March 23, the Center, in conjunction with the WCL International Legal Studies Program, hosted an event called “Human Rights and Religious Freedom in Iran: The Situation of the Baha’is” to raise awareness and discuss issues surrounding the seven leaders of the Iranian Baha’i community currently imprisoned on espionage charges and the ongoing impact of this religious persecution. Speakers included WCL student **Ian Harris** (3L), **Sarah Price** (Institute on Religion and Public Policy) and **Leila Milani** (human rights attorney) who

described the situation on the ground in Iran as well as human rights approaches to addressing this issue. The event concluded with a testimonial from **Manousheed van de Fliert** whose mother was killed in Iran because of her faith. Ms. van de Fliert’s story touched those in the audience and put a face on the human rights abuses occurring in that country.

### **Leading Colombian Human Rights Defenders Discuss Baseless Persecution at Event Co-Sponsored with Human Rights First**

The Center and Human Rights First collaborated to organize March 24’s event “In the Dock and Under the Gun: Baseless Prosecutions of Human Rights Defenders Colombia.” The event featured **Liliana Andrea Avila** (Colombian Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace Luz), **Marina Monzon** (Colombian Commission of Justice), and **Andrew Hudson** (Human Rights First). Avila and Monzon described how the Colombian legal system has been used to silence and stigmatize the human rights movement in that country. Hudson also presented the new Human Rights First report that documents the extensive use of specious criminal investigations in Colombia.

### **Film Screening of “The Response” Raises Issues Surrounding Military Tribunals and Guantanamo at Event Co-Hosted by the Center and the National Institute of Military Justice**

On April 1, the Center and the National Institute of Military Justice (NIMJ) co-hosted a screening of Sig Libowitz’s film “The Response.” The movie is a courtroom drama based on the actual transcripts of the Guantanamo Bay military tribunals and was filmed over three days at the University of Maryland School of Law. It has received numerous awards and high praise from critics, academics, and members of the military. Following the screening, director **Sig Libowitz** and NIMJ’s Assistant Director **Jonathan Tracy** fielded questions from an eager audience about the film and the complex and controversial nature of military tribunals.

### **DOJ Attorneys Meet with WCL Students to Discuss Human Rights Work in the US Government**

Attorneys with the Department of Justice’s Criminal Division office who are engaged in prosecuting human rights violations met with interested students and staff on April 2. The roundtable format allowed the students to ask questions about the best steps to start a career in the DOJ and/or federal government. The attorneys—**Teresa McHenry**, **Michael Surgalla**, and **Ivana Nizich**—also fielded questions about their own work at the DOJ.

### **The Center Marks the 15th Anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide with the Discussion “Is the Concept of Genocide Obsolete?”**

Fifteen years have passed since the genocide in Rwanda and the Center marked this sober milestone with a lunchtime discussion and film screening with students on April 7. A screening of the 15 minute film “A Good Man in Hell” about General Romeo Dallaire was followed by a discussion with the Center’s Executive Director **Hadar Harris** on the question of whether the concept of genocide is obsolete. Attendees discussed their ideas about the concept of genocide, its significance in international law, and the responsibilities of nations to act to prevent such atrocities.

### **Three WCL Students Chosen as First Fellows for the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the US House of Representatives**

Three WCL students, **Dean Dastvar**, **Lindsay Partridge**, and **Miriam Song**, have been chosen through a selective process to serve as the first Fellows for the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the United States Congress. The Fellows will participate in all aspects of the Commission’s work by assisting in researching and preparing hearings, researching legislation, investigating cases, and performing other duties. This special fellowship will run from June to December. The Fellowship is part of an ongoing collaboration between the Commission and the WCL Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

## The Center Designates its 2009–2010 Student Advisory Board Members

Congratulations to members of the 2009–2010 Student Advisory Board (SAB), chosen this past February. This year's SAB members are: **Bryan Evans, Lauren Forbes, Carlin Moore, Anne Parsons, Alvir Sadhwani, Eleanor Thompson, and Soumya Venkatesh.** These students bring a wide range of experiences and skills to their new roles and are looking forward to a productive and fulfilling year ahead. The Student Advisory Board, created in 2003, is dedicated to broadening the perspectives of WCL students on human rights issues and encouraging student involvement in both Center and community activities.

## FACULTY AND STAFF UPDATE

**Claudio Grossman** is WCL Dean and Co-Director of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. The *Revista Aboch* of the Association of Lawyers in Chile will publish his interview entitled “La modernidad y la necesidad de Justicia requieren revisar críticamente los contenidos de la educación y las metodologías.” Moreover, the Pennsylvania State International Law Review will publish his comments on a panel discussion entitled “Enriching the Law School Curriculum in an Increasingly Interrelated World—Learning from Each Other.” Dean Grossman's presentation concerned the “Problems with the Traditional Case Law Method.” In addition, the Fundación Abravanel in Buenos Aires,

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Argentina will publish his remarks at a colloquium on Antiterrorism Legislation and Human Rights in *Terrorismo Internacional y Derechos Humanos: Apuntes Para Una Legislación Antiterrorista* (2008). Finally, Dean Grossman will publish “Building the World Community Through Legal Education,” in *The Internationalization of Law and Legal Education* (2008), which constitutes volume 14 of *Ius Gentium: Comparative Perspectives on Law and Justice*.

On February 23, 2009, Dean Grossman was co-organizer and panelist at the “International Conference on the Prevention of Torture and Other Ill-Treatment,” cosponsored by WCL and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT). He spoke about domestic incorporation of obligations under the UN Convention against Torture. Also in February, he presented two lectures at the University of Puerto Rico Law School: “Challenges to Legal Education in the 21st Century” and “The Future of the Inter-American System of Human Rights.”

On March 5, 2009, Dean Grossman was interviewed by Radio America's news program, *Calentando La Mañana*, regarding the Twelfth Annual Hispanic Law Conference. He also participated in an April 1 hearing before a special session of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, conducted in the Dominican Republic in the case of *Usón Ramírez v. Venezuela*, as part of the WCL Impact Litigation Program. Francisco Usón Ramírez was convicted of dishonoring and disrespecting the armed forces of Venezuela before

a military tribunal; the case involves serious violations to the rights of freedom of expression, due process, and access to justice, in violation of both the American Convention on Human Rights and Venezuela's own constitution.

Dean Grossman also delivered remarks for the Roots and Wings International Benefit, held at the Art Museum for the Americas at the Organization of American States on April 7. On April 10, he presented to the faculty on the “Future of the Inter-American System on Human Rights” as part of WCL's Faculty Speakers Series and presented at a panel at WCL entitled “Litigating Before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights: *Usón Ramírez v. Venezuela*” on April 21. Dean Grossman gave remarks at the Women and the Law Leadership Luncheon on April 22; on April 23, he was interviewed by Univisión regarding international law and the detainees at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Dean Grossman will participate as Chair at the United Nations Committee against Torture's 42nd Session in Geneva, Switzerland from April 27–May 15 and is scheduled to participate in a conference concerning the Inter-American Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons. Finally, he will be part of the panel judging the final round of the Inter-American Moot Court Competition at WCL and will co-teach a course on the Inter-American System on Human Rights at WCL's Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in June 2009.

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